

U.S. Fire Administration
FIGHT FIRE WITH FACTS

Winter Fires

More than 4,000 Americans die each year in fires and approximately 20,000 are injured. Many of them might be alive today if only they had the information they needed to avoid a disaster. The U.S. Fire Administration offers the following life-saving tips that could make a big difference for you and your community.

Following these simple fire safety tips can increase your survival rate dramatically.

Winter Fires Life-Saving Tips

- ☑ Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Test smoke alarm batteries every month and change them at least once a year. Consider installing a 10-year lithium battery-powered smoke alarm, which is sealed so it cannot be tampered with or opened.
- ☑ Make sure wood stoves are properly installed, away from combustible surfaces, have the proper floor support and adequate ventilation. Never use flammable liquids (such as gasoline) to start or accelerate a fire in a wood stove.
- ☑ Make sure your space heaters have an emergency shutoff in case they tip over. Kerosene heaters are not permitted in many areas. ONLY use the fuel recommended by the manufacturer. Never refill a space heater while it is operating or still hot. Refuel outside, away from the house.
- ☑ Have your furnace and chimney professionally inspected annually and cleaned if necessary. Chimney tar buildup is a common cause of chimney fires.
- ☑ Use a glass or metal screen in front of your fireplace to prevent sparks igniting nearby carpets or furniture.
- ☑ Never thaw frozen pipes with a blow torch or other open flame. Use hot water or a UL-listed device such as a hand-held dryer.
- ☑ Dispose of hot ashes in covered metal containers placed away from the house.
- ☑ Never use the range or oven to heat your home.
- ☑ If there is a fire hydrant near your home, keep it clear of snow for easy access

Did you know?

- ▶ Eighty-two percent of all fire deaths occur in the home.
- ▶ Electrical fires are a special concern during the winter months, which call for more indoor activities and increased use of lighting, heating, and appliances.
- ▶ Deaths caused by winter fires are particularly preventable.
- ▶ For more information on how you can help prevent fires and fire deaths, please contact your local fire department on a nonemergency number or the U.S. Fire Administration at (800) 238-3358 or visit **www.usfa.fema.gov** or **www.firesafety.gov**.



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